



Cantaloupe

Fact Sheet



Where did they come from?

Cantaloupe is a variety of fruit from the melon family. It originated in the Middle East and eventually spread across Europe. Cantaloupe was named after Cantalupo, Italy, the city where cantaloupe was originally cultivated from Armenia melon seeds in the 1700's. Christopher Columbus transported melon seeds to the United States, which were later cultivated by Spanish explorers in California. Cantaloupe, which is actually called a muskmelon, is the most common melon within the United States.

Where do they grow?

The majority of cantaloupe produced in the United States is grown in California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. Imported cantaloupe comes from Mexico and Central America including Costa Rica, Guatemala and Honduras. Cantaloupe is available year-round but their peak season is June through August.

How do they grow?

Cantaloupes are round with a golden tightly netted skin. The inside or flesh is a pinkish orange to bright orange. This melon grows best in sandy, aerated and well-watered soil, which is free of weeds. Cantaloupe plants are produced by planting melon seeds. The melons grow on vines along the soil.

Are they healthy?

- ✎ Good source of potassium, vitamin A and C
- ✎ Contain a high water content
- ✎ Low in calories and cholesterol and also fat free

How do you pick a good one?

- ✎ Choose one which is round, firm and slightly golden
- ✎ Select cantaloupe with a sweet smell
- ✎ Avoid those with cracks, soft spots or dark bruises

☺ FUN FACTS! ☺

Cantaloupe

Did you know...

- ☺ Did you know that melons are in the same gourd family as squashes and cucumbers?
- ☺ Did you know cantaloupe is a juicy, sweet alternative for dessert?
- ☺ Did you know that cantaloupe is the most popular melon in the United States?
- ☺ Did you know that a squirt of lemon or lime juice will enhance or perk up the flavor of a slice of cantaloupe?
- ☺ Did you know that there are six common sizes of cantaloupe?
(The sizes are 9, 12, 15, 18, 23 and 30. They are grouped into specific sizes based on their weight and the number that can fit into a 40-pound case or cardboard shipping box. A size 12 means that there are 12 cantaloupe of similar weight, approximately 3¼ lbs., in a 40-pound box. The smaller the number, the larger the cantaloupe.)
- ☺ Did you know by leaving uncut cantaloupe at room temperature for two to four days the fruit will become softer and juicier?

Remember ...

Include 5 - 9 servings of fruits and vegetables per day!



School Food Service Link.....

Quick Steps to 5 - 9 servings of fruits and vegetables per day at school...

Listed below are suggestions that you may choose at your own discretion

RECIPES:

- ✓ Try a new recipe with cantaloupe ---
Cantaloupe Salsa (see attached)
Southwestern Cantaloupe Salad; Offer on a salad bar or as a side with a prepackaged salad (see attached)
- ✓ Add as a garnish to your prepackaged fresh green or spinach salads
- ✓ Offer as a fruit choice for breakfast or lunch
(1/8 of a 15 count cantaloupe = ½ cup fruit)
- ✓ Mix with canned fruits for an interesting fruit salad
- ✓ Dice to make fruit salsa
- ✓ Add to chicken or turkey salad
- ✓ Offer on a fruit tray for special functions, events or catering

Presentation Meal Appeal -----

Add a Slice or Wedge of Cantaloupe to Tossed Salads for Color, a Sweet Taste and Eye Appeal!

MARKETING:

- ✓ Hang up posters from your "Fruits & Vegetables Galore" Kit
Enjoy Fruits & Vegetables! (Poster has a picture of cantaloupe on it; It is from the American Cancer Society; Contact them for more posters or other resources; Phone: 1-800-ACS-2345 www.cancer.org)
- ✓ Advertise and highlight the fruit or vegetable of the month on your menu
- ✓ Refer to "Fruits & Vegetables Galore" Kit (*Meal Appeal Manual*) page 9

Quality:

Refrigerate Cut Melons in a Covered Container. Melons are Aromatic and their Smell can Penetrate Other Foods!

PROMOTIONS:

- ✓ Promote a "Sticker Day" with prizes on featured fruit/vegetable menu day;
Give this menu a special name (*Example: Crazy for Cantaloupe!*)
- ✓ Feature as a special 5-A-Day promo since September is "National 5-A-Day Month"
- ✓ Conduct a "Melon Trivia Contest"! Display different varieties of melons and let students try to guess the name of each melon. Students that turn in a form with all the correct answers win a prize! (*Prize Example: Melon/Casaba to take home*)
- ✓ Feature "Orange Day" on the day that you offer cantaloupe on your menu
 - ✓ Encourage the entire school to get involved
 - ✓ Reward students with a small prize if they are wearing orange
- ✓ Turn your salad bar into a self-serve fruit and vegetable bar once/week or month
 - ✓ Select produce in season
 - ✓ Utilize commodity frozen and canned fruits and vegetables and dried fruits
- ✓ Refer to "Fruits & Vegetables Galore" Kit (*Meal Appeal Manual*) pages 16-31

Safety:

Wash the Outside of Cantaloupes with a Firm Brush!



School Food Service Link.....



School Food Service Recipes



Cantaloupe Salsa

Makes 24 each ½ cup Servings

Source: Produce for Better Health/Del Monte Fresh Produce Company

3 each Cantaloupe
4 ½ cups Red Bell Pepper, Finely Chopped
1 ½ cups Cilantro or Parsley, Finely Chopped
1 cup Scallions, Finely Chopped
Juice of 6 Limes
Pinch of Salt & Hot Pepper Flakes

Directions:

Remove seeds and rind from cantaloupe. Chop cantaloupe into very small diced pieces. Put in a bowl. Add diced red pepper, cilantro, scallions and lime juice. Stir. Add pinch of salt and pepper flakes. Chill. Serve with chicken, hamburgers, chicken sandwiches, wraps, salads...

Nutritional Analysis Per Serving: Calories 21, Protein 1g, Fat 1g, Cholesterol 0mg, Carbohydrates 5g, Fiber 2g, Sodium 62mg

Southwestern Cantaloupe Salad

Makes 24 each ½ cup Servings

Source: Produce for Better Health/Del Monte Fresh Produce Company

24 oz. Cantaloupe, Thinly Sliced
24 oz. Jicama, Peeled and Thinly Sliced
18 oz. Red Bell Pepper, Roasted, Sliced
18 oz. Yellow Bell Pepper, Roasted, Sliced
1/3 cup Fresh Basil, Chopped or 2 Tablespoons of Dried Basil
¾ cup No Fat Italian Dressing

Directions:

Combine cantaloupe, jicama, peppers, and basil. Add salad dressing. Mix well.

Nutritional Analysis Per Serving: Calories 42, Protein 1g, Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg, Carbohydrates 8g, Fiber 3g, Sodium 154mg